

Equal Opportunity Planning 1997-2002 KY Plan and OCR Partnership Status

The Commonwealth continues to make significant progress in implementing the commitments of the partnership agreement. The postsecondary institutions are implementing innovative programs to reach the partnership goals. The Office for Civil Rights is pleased with the achievements made by each university as described in the status reports submitted in August 2000 and July 2001.

The council staff has submitted a third report. It responds to concerns noted in the OCR's analysis of the second report and also provides information about institutional progress since July 2001. Following is a summary of the third report to the OCR.

I. Enhancement of Kentucky State University

The agreement contains five commitments that address the enhancement of KSU: 1) facilities, 2) governance, 3) communications and diversity programming, 4) a funding analysis, and 5) collaborative efforts to enhance KSU's academic vitality. The OCR indicates that it is pleased with the progress of the Commonwealth regarding these commitments. To highlight:

- The partnership identified three facilities at KSU that require improvement, Carver Hall, Hathaway Hall, and Young Hall dormitory. The 2000 General Assembly provided funds to renovate Carver and Hathaway Halls. Planning to renovate Carver is underway. The council recommended to the Governor that additional funds be appropriated for Hathaway Hall in 2002-04. Young Hall dormitory is included in the council's recommendation for agency bond authority in 2002-04.
- The council completed an historical analysis of KSU's state appropriations and confirmed that the current benchmark funding method does not have a disparate effect on the university. KSU currently receives the highest amount of state appropriations per full-time equivalent student of all the public comprehensive universities.
- The Agricultural Research, Extension and Education Reform Act of 1998 requires a 50 percent match of federal land grant funds. The council's 2002-04 biennial budget recommendations include a request for state funds to complete the federal match requirement.
- KSU is working with the other public institutions to strengthen and enhance its academic programs.

- On November 5, 2001, the council approved KSU's request to establish a new Bachelor of Science program in nursing.
- KSU has implemented a comprehensive program of communication and diversity training.
- The Governor appointed two new members to the KSU Board of Regents.

II. Recruitment and Retention of African American Students

Overall, the traditionally white public universities have shown steady progress in the retention of Kentucky African American students: 70.9 percent of first-time African American students were retained in 2000 and 71.7 percent of all degree-seeking undergraduate African American students were retained in 2000. During the campus visits, the OCR identified programs at each institution that showed promise. The institutions are continuing to use those programs to recruit and retain African American students. Also, the OCR cited as successful programs the Governor's Minority Student College Preparation Program, the SREB Compact for Faculty Diversity, the annual conference of GMSCP directors and students, the Proficient Seniors Conference, and the YMCA Black Achievers program.

Eastern Kentucky University, Morehead State University, Murray State University, Northern Kentucky University, and the University of Louisville have made organizational changes aimed at improving recruitment and retention of African American students. The OCR continues to be concerned about the effect of the University of Louisville Pathways program and the summer transition program on Kentucky African American students.

III. Enhancement of Campus Climate for African American Students

Each university formed a campus environment team to address campus climate and community related issues for African American students. The roles of the teams are evolving. At the time of the most recent campus visits by the OCR and the Committee on Equal Opportunities, the teams were examining issues that affect the racial climate on their respective campuses. The OCR made a number of suggestions to further define the function of the campus environment team at several campuses. Information contained in the third report indicates that institutions are implementing the recommendations that are contained in the site visit reports.

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